

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation of dependent claim 21. Claim 21 has accordingly been cancelled, as has claim 3, as the limitations included within these dependent claims are now present in claim 1.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of claim 21 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the Sakata '050 patent. In making his rejection, the Examiner first admits that "Sakata does not show the ribs to extend a greater radial distance than the thickness of the support portion wall,...", but then goes on to contend that

"...it would have been obvious to the ordinarily skilled artisan at the time of invention to increase the size of the arcuate gaps between the support and bottom portions of the case as doing so would decrease the amount of material for the case and thus reduce manufacturing costs of the device."

As the Examiner is no doubt aware, in order to sustain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103 by the modification of a single reference, the Examiner must demonstrate the existence of a motivation, incentive or teaching (either express or implied) that would lead a person of ordinary skill in the art to make such a modification. This the Examiner has singularly failed to do for at least three reasons. First, it is not clear at all that the arcuate shapes illustrated in Figures 3, 8, 9, 10 and 25 of the Sakata '050 patent are, in fact, arcuate openings that extend completely through the bearing 58. Indeed, there are no reference numerals associated with the arcuate shapes in these figures, and no description whatever in the text of the specification. While there are also arcuate shapes 81 illustrated in Figure 6, it is clear that these are merely shallow recesses 81, as described in column 13, line 43. Hence, in the context of the specification as a whole, it is not clear at all that the unnumbered arcuate shapes define or represent openings that completely traverse the bearing 58 in such a manner as to define ribs. Accordingly, there is no express suggestion, motivation or teaching of the ribs specifically recited in amended claim 1, much less that such ribs should extend "a greater radial distance than the thickness of the support portion wall..." Nor is there any implied suggestion of these limitations. There is no discussion or recognition whatever in the Sakata '050 patent of the problems that the instant invention solves, i.e., the maintenance of mechanical

strength and rigidity of the support portion of the case without the plastic-shrinkage problems incurred when the support portion is molded from solid plastic material. In fact, Figures 13-21 of the '050 patent illustrate an embodiment that appears to be completely devoid of the arcuate shapes associated with the embodiments shown in Figures 3, 8, 9, 10 and 25, thus implying that the arcuate shapes (whether they be recesses or through-holes) are completely optional, and non-critical. In short, as there is no expressed or implied motivation, incentive or teaching within the Sakata '050 patent that there be any ribs at all in the bearing 58, much less reinforcing ribs that "radially extend from said support portion a distance substantially greater than a thickness of set annual wall.." amended claim 1 is clearly patentable over the art of record.

As the balance of the claims 2, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23 and 24 are each dependent upon amended claim 1, each of these claims is patentable at least by reason of such dependency.

Moreover, claim 23 is further patentable or its recitation that the ribs are spaced "substantially uniformly around set support portion..", a feature which (contrary to the Examiner's assertion) is entirely devoid in the Sakata '050 patent.

Claim 24 is likewise further patentable for its recitation that the "radially extent of said base portion is larger than the radially extend of set support portion,..", another feature completely devoid in the specification of the Sakata '050 patent.

New Claim 25 is patentable for its recitation of a folding-type mirror device for a vehicle having a support shaft and a case, and "a plurality of support ribs which are disposed inside the case..." As previously point out, the Saketa '050 patent neither discloses nor suggests the presence of any ribs at all in the bearing 58, much less such ribs "inside the case...". Accordingly, claim 25 is patentable.

Now that all the claims are believed to be patentable, the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is hereby earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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